

COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
MINUTES OF MEETING JANUARY 29, 2018

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** George Brewer Chairman  
Matthew Stiles Vice-Chairman  
Leslie Rea  
James Hand  
Sue Ann Wheeler  
Alfred Natali Teleconference  
Barbara Ernst Div. Dir. Open Space &  
Farmland Pres.  
Jenny Carleo Agriculture Agent  
David Reilly Cape/Atlantic Conservation Dist.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Brewer called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

**NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Mrs. Ernst asked for nominations for Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary.

Mr. Hand made a motion to keep the current slate of officers in their positions:

George Brewer Chairman  
Matthew Stiles Vice-Chairman  
Barbara Ernst Secretary

Mr. Rea seconded the motion.

Roll Call taken, George Brewer, Yes; Matthew Stiles, Yes; Leslie Rea, Yes; Jamie Hand, Yes; Alfred Natalie, Yes Sue Ann Wheeler, Yes. The motion passed with 6 yes votes to approve Mr. George Brewer as Chairman, Mr. Matthew Stiles, Vice-Chairman, and Barbara Ernst, Secretary of the County Agriculture Development Board for a term of 1 year.

**MINUTES:** Mr. Stiles made a motion and it was seconded by Mr. Hand to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2017 meeting.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT:** Mrs. Ernst reviewed the financial statement that showed the balance in the fund at the end of November 30, 2017 was \$13,658,898.12, and \$1,322,630.00 although not encumbered was projected to cover approved projects in the Open Space program, leaving \$11,861,268.12 available for funding.

**RESOLUTION CADB 1-18, WILLIAM SIMMERMAN, UPPER TOWNSHIP , BLOCK 476, LOT 17, 16.2 ACRES**

Mrs. Ernst said an application had been received from Mr. Simmerman to certify his farm, Misty Meadow Farm, as a commercial farm. His current agricultural production is the breeding of Boer goats and East Friesian sheep for milking, hay and pasture. He also intends to build a creamery to make cheese.

Mrs. Ernst said that Mr. Simmerman had supplied copies of his 2016 Schedule F from his income tax return detailing income of \$2,670, and an agricultural commodities list showing income for the year 2017 at \$3,000 from the sale of 6 goats at \$500 each. The farm assessment application for 2018, approved by the local assessor, lists 8.50 acres in permanent pasture and 5.90 acres in appurtenant woodland. He is farm assessed as of January 1, 2018 as verified by the certified Property Record Card updated on December 7, 2017 and the certified 2018 Tax List.

Mrs. Ernst said that a letter from Ms. Shelley Lea, Zoning Officer, states that the property is a legal permitted farm, the property may continue to be utilized as a farm, and that the farm use had never been abandoned.

Mrs. Ernst said that she, Matt Stiles, Vice-Chairman, and Dave Riley, Cape Atlantic Soil Conservation had inspected the farm on January 26, 2018 and that the farm conforms with the generally-accepted agricultural management practices.

Mrs. Ernst asked Mr. Simmerman, if to the best of his knowledge he complies with all relevant federal or state statutes and regulations, and Mr. Simmerman replied yes that he does.

She also asked him if his operation posed any direct threat to public health and safety and he replied no.

Chairman Brewer asked for a motion to approve Resolution 1-18 designating Misty Meadows Farm as a commercial farm. Ms. Wheeler made a motion, and it was seconded by Mr. Rea.

Roll Call taken, George Brewer, Yes; Matthew Stiles, Yes; Leslie Rea, Yes; Jamie Hand, Yes; Alfred Natalie, Yes Sue Ann Wheeler, Yes. The motion passed with 6 yes votes.

Chairman Brewer asked Mr. Simmerman if he would like to say a few words about his operation. Mr. Simmerman said he did a lot of

research on Friesian Sheep and they are the highest milk producing breed available. He said during their lactation period, they can produce anywhere from

Minutes of January 29, 2018  
Page 3

500 to 1000 gallons. He said the sheep that he currently has are a result of several breeders that used genetics to achieve this high production. He said his herd is currently parasite resistant, and that that after his creamery is open he will be able to make yogurt for children who are lactose intolerant. He said he is doing all this for his grandchildren so that they can appreciate the rural life and area.

Mr. Simmerman said he has 34 pregnant ewes and each one has a pedigree. Between now and April, he may have 100 babies. Mr. Hand asked if he had a mechanical milker. He said that he currently does not, but will be buying an all automated one. Mr. Simmerman said he is working closely with NRCS and USDA and they are the agencies that helped him draw up a farm plan. He also has some 100% dapple goats to bring color into the farm as his sheep are all white, and children will like the beautiful coloring.

Mr. Hand asked Mr. Simmerman if he had trouble with coyotes. Mr. Simmerman said that he sees them all time at the southern end, that he has an electric fence and will also be buying protective dogs.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mrs. Natalie Neiss, 759 Route 50, a neighbor, said that she has been dealing with the non-compliant farming operation for over a year. She said that the township is not even complying with its own regulations in reference COAH housing. She said that Mr. Simmerman clear cut some of his land without filing an application with the State or Pinelands.

She said that she has also brought all these issues to the attention of Mrs. Ernst, without any resolution, since as Mrs. Ernst had pointed out to her, Misty Meadows was not a commercial farm, and the CADB did not have any jurisdiction on what was a municipal issue. Mrs. Neiss said that she is stating the date and condensing the contents of several letters that she wanted to be part of the public record.

May 4, 2017, Mr. Simmerman in a Center Residential Zoning District.  
June 26, 2017, Shelley Lea, Mr. Simmerman no permit for existing mobile home house trailer.  
June 29, 2017, Shelley Lea, Compel Mr. Simmerman to stop farming, not permitted us.  
July 7, 2017, Shelley Lea, pole barn exceeds 10 feet in height.  
October 23, 2017, County Counsel advising Dan Young, jurisdiction is within the municipality.  
November 17, 2017, Allison Reynolds follow up on telephone conversation.

Mrs. Ernst again explained the inability to hear complaints against a property owner that was not designated a commercial farm. She said that with today's designation, if Mrs. Neiss wants to file a complaint, then there is a specific process that was adopted by the CADB to follow which

Minutes of January 29, 2018

Page 4

includes a complaint form, 200 foot notice, public hearing. Mrs. Ernst gave Mrs. Neiss the complaint form along with the procedure document.

Mrs. Raegan, the former owner of the property, stated the property had not been farmed from 1986-2012. She said all the woodlands had been demolished without the neighbors being advised on what was going on. She said the farming purpose of this parcel was fine, but the water is questionable. She said there was an issue several years ago, with a large sign noticing the public. She is not sure the water issue has been resolved.

Mr. Natali said that at the last State Ag. Board Meeting, one of the members, Mr. William Morse, complained that the SADC Green Light application process was slow. Instead of the 10 day turnaround, the SADC is taking 60 days or more to advise of its decision.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Rea made a motion, it was seconded by Mr. Hand and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 5:50 P.M.

Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting March 26, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara M. Ernst

